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(Tuesday Evening, Feb. 9, 1897.)

You will find the basis of our study this evening in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah and the third verse: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from Mm; he was despised, and we esteemed him not." In connection with this I will read several other verses of the same chapter, and also a translation, which will enable us to obtain the thought more clearly: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." The other translation reads: "Surely he bore our griefs, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was pierced through by our sins; he was crushed by our misdeeds. The chastisement of our peace lay upon him, and in his wounds there became healing for us. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Another translation: "The Lord let all our misdeeds come upon Mm." Verse eight: "He was taken from prison and from judgment; and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living. For the transgression of my people was he stricken." The other translation: "From distress and judgment, was he taken; and in

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generation who thought that he should be plucked out of the land of the living for the misdeeds of my people, punishment to them." Tenth verse: "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put Mm to grief. When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sic, he shall see his seed, lie shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." Translation: "It pleased the Lord to let him be crushed; he hath made him sick; when his soul hath given a trespass offering, he shall see seed and live long."

The thought is clearly enough expressed in the Authorized Version, but since we are liable sometimes to receive the wrong thought, the translation helps us to see it more clearly.

The third verse states and vividly contrasts the true and the false idea of Christ's mission, and of his work, and of the atonement. One is what was (and the other is what we thought was; one is truth, the other is falsehood; one is Christianity, the other is paganism. We would do well to study every thought in that text. "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; he was pierced through by our misdeeds, and God permitted it because in his stripes there was healing for us. But we esteemed him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. Whose griefs? Whose sorrows?—Ours. The grief and the sorrow that crushed the heart of Christ, and took him from among the living, so that he died of a broken heart,

was no strange, new grief or sorrow. It was not something unlike what we have to bear; it was not God arbitrarily putting upon him our sins, and thus punishing our sins in him to deliver us. He took no position arbitrarily that we do not have to suffer. It was our griefs and our sorrows that pierced him through. He took our sinful natures, and our sinful flesh, at the point of weakness to which we had brought it, submitting himself to all the conditions of the race, and placing himself where we are to fight the conflict that we have to fight, the fight of faith. And he did this by the same power to which we have access. By the Spirit of God he cast out devils; through the eternal Spirit he offered himself without spot; and the Spirit of God rested upon him, and made him of quick understanding in the things of God. It was our sins that he took; our temptations.

It is my experience that in nine cases out of ten, when men consider those temptations in the fourth chapter of Matthew, which are typical of all his temptations, they fail to recognize their likeness to our own. They make him tempted in all points like as we are not, rather than like as we are. Picture to yourselves the wonderful experience that Christ had at his baptism, when he entered upon his mission, when the Spirit of God descended upon him with power, and the voice was heard, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." It would seem that after such an experience as that, it would surely be all smooth sailing. But out there in the wilderness, when the Saviour was in apparent weakness and Hunger, the devil pressed him, saying, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."

Have we not had this experience? How many of us can look back to the time when we were baptized, when we heard God saying to us, This is my beloved son, this is my beloved daughter, in whom I am well pleased; and we thought we would have smooth sailing, but soon found ourselves out in some wilderness of temptation, conscious of our weakness, and the devil came along; and said, You are a pretty servant of God.

Again the devil took him up into a high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the earth, and said: "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me," The circumstances were such as to make it plain that the design of the devil was to lead him to bow down and support a god of force, instead of making him the king of the world. He would have him be untrue to his mission. And so he would have us, by some false method, to think that we may make a great many more dollars, and to see how much of the world we can get. When he failed with Christ on these two points, he pressed him farther to get him to presume upon the mercy of God. Just so he would tempt us to presume upon the mercy of God.

He took our sorrows, our griefs, all the conflicts of our lives upon him, and was tempted in all points as we are. He took the 'injustices of our lives upon him too. It is a fact that you and I have to suffer for many things for which we are not at fault. All my suffering is not the result of my sin. Some of it is; but just as long as sin exists, injustice exists. As long as men sin, men will be sinned against. Just so you and I will

have to suffer for the sins of others; and so God, to show that he knew and realized all that, let him that was perfectly innocent, take the injustice and sin of us all. O brethren and sisters, he did not bear some other grief or some other sorrow, but he bore our griefs and our sorrows. He was pierced through by them, and the Lord permitted it, because there was healing in it for us; not that he might appease God, or reconcile him unto us. Every passage of Scripture that refers to the reconciliation or atonement, or to the propitiation, always represents God as the one who makes this atonement, reconciliation, or propitiation, in Christ; we are always the ones atoned for, the ones to be reconciled. For us it was done, in order that, as Peter says, he might bring us to God.

The only way to do this is by destroying sin in us. He took our sins upon himself in order that he might break down the high middle wall of partition between human hearts and God, between Jew and Gentile, between God and man; that he might make us one with himself, and one with one another, thus making the at-one-ment, or the atonement. In Christ Jesus we who were sometimes afar off were made nigh by the blood of Christ, so that we are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and, of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth into an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God, through the Spirit." This is as near to the Lord as we can get.

This is the at-one-ment; this is why he bore our griefs and carried our sorrows, that he might do that for us by breaking down all those things which separate hearts from hearts, both human and divine. Notwithstanding this, we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. That was what we thought about it. We said, God is doing all this; God is killing him, punishing him, to satisfy his wrath, in order to let us off. That is the pagan conception of sacrifice. The Christian idea of sacrifice is this, let us note the contrast. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." That is the Christian idea. Yes, sir. Indifference keeps, hatred keeps, selfishness keeps, or gives, if at all, but grudgingly, counting the cost, and figuring on some larger return at some future time. But love, and love only, sacrifices, gives freely, gives itself, gives without counting the cost, gives because it is love. That is sacrifice, whether it is the sacrifice of bulls and goats, or of him who is the lamb of God. It is the sacrifice that is revealed throughout the entire Bible. But the pagan idea of sacrifice is just the opposite. It is that some god is always offended, always angry, and his wrath must be propitiated in some way.

If it is an ordinary case, the blood of bulls and goats will suffice; but if it is an extraordinary case, the blood of some innocent virgin or child must flow; and when the god smells the blood, his wrath is appeased. We talk of pagan immortality, pagan Sunday, pagan idolatry, etc.; but it seems to me that the lowest thought is that men have brought this pagan idea of sacrifice right into the Bible, and applied it to the sacrifice of the cross. So the Methodist Discipline uses these words: "Christ died to reconcile the Father

unto us;" that is, to propitiate God so that we could be forgiven—paganism straight out. Why, brethren and sisters, it is the application of the pagan conception of sacrifice to the sacrifice upon the cross, so that that wonderful manifestation of divine love, which God intended should cause all men, all beings in the universe, to wonder and adore, has been turned around and made a manifestation of wrath to be propitiated in order to save man. I am glad that we are losing sight of this manner of viewing the subject, where we do not say that Christ died to reconcile the Father unto us. Brethren, there is sometimes such a thing as to give up the expression of a tiring, and think we have thus gotten rid of it, when a good deal of it still lingers and clouds our consciousness of the love of God, and the beauty of his truth,, so that we cannot present a clear gospel to hungry souls that are waiting to know about God. I pray that God will let the sunlight of his truth shine into my heart, and into all of our hearts. Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows that he might bring us to him; but we esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. That is what we thought; that is what we esteemed; not what was, but what we thought was. Now, every text in the Bible that speaks of reconciliation, makes God the one who makes the reconciliation,—God in Christ. Every text in the Bible that speaks of the atonement, when we get it right, makes God the one who makes the atonement in Christ; not Christ simply, but God in Christ; just as God in Christ creates, redeems, reconciles, he makes the atonement. And every time the

atonement, reconciliation, or propitiation are mentioned, it leads us right back to the character of God. So I want to begin right here, and study God a little, and study him as the All Truth. He is the All Truth. He is love. "God is love." Let us analyze that just a little, and see what it means. Does it mean that God is love, and part something else?—No. The Bible says that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. God is truth. Christ says, "I am the truth"; and again, "I and my Father are one;" so God is truth. He is the All Truth of the universe made living and personal, and touched with tender, throbbing love. That is God, and that is Christ too. Yes, he is the light, and in him is no darkness at all. He is all love and no hatred. Very well.

Someone says, I know, I know; God is love, but he is love and justice. Now the minute a man says that, and means what he says, there is nothing more unjust in this universe than his idea of justice. Let us think of that for a moment. Is there justice outside of love. Suppose I love A and B. But I love A more than B. Is it my lack of love to B that prompts my love for A?—No, it is not. Now is there such a thing as loving a man with an impartial love. Can I be unjust to anybody? God is just, because He is love.

We talk about the mercy of God. What is mercy?—Disposition to treat an offender better than he deserves. We talk about his grace. Grace is unmerited favor. That is the way God does. Shows unmerited favor. All these are moral attributes of love.

How does righteousness come? Righteousness, which is the fulfilling of the law, is simply acting out the acts of love. How am I going to act out the acts of love? Try real hard to love somebody?

It does not come that way. Did you ever try it? No, sir; you cannot make it that way. But if somebody acts loveable, you love him. And so the reason God can love everything, and thus act out the acts of love, is because God is love. He has manifested himself to beget his love in us, and that love flows out in righteousness. Then the power of God is the power of love. If I had time I would carry that beyond moral power; it is even the power that upholds the universe. It is all. And now a moment on the omniscience of God.

I want to show you that if God should cease to be all-loving, he would cease to be all-knowing. Can hatred, envy, and jealousy know and comprehend love? The infinite Love was once in this world, in human form; and what did they do to him?—They crucified him. What did they crucify him for?—Because they knew him not. Hatred, envy, and jealousy can look infinite Love in the face, and not know it. Only love can comprehend love. Love can also see hatred, envy, and jealousy in their true light, because love seeth, knoweth, and comprehendeth all things. And that is why God can be omniscient, because lie is love. It is one of the attributes of love. But some one says that God is love and, and—. God is love, and he is not anything but love. All the attributes of God are the attributes of love.

And then there is the wrath of God that you read about all through the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. I want to turn and read a text on this point. We can only understand these things that are brought to view in the Bible, when we see them in the light and the grace of the revelation of God. The scripture I will read is found in

2 Cor. 3:12-16: "Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: and not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished." God had many things to show to them that they could not bear ; and as they could not see the true glory as it was, he had to veil it, so they could take it. "But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ.

But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken

And, brethren, if we want to understand what God has said all through this Book, we want to turn to him, and we will understand all.

Was there ever a being in this world that hated sin as Christ hates it?—No. Was there ever a being who loved the sinner as Christ loved him?—No. Suppose I hate a man, and somebody is trying to do that man an injury, and I see it, and do not try to prevent it. Do I care whether that man is injured or not?—No; I am rather glad of it. But suppose I love that man, and here is a man that is trying to thrust a dagger into him and kill him. Now the measure of my hatred for that deed is the measure of my love for that man. I am liable to hate the man that is doing the deed, too. But I hate the deed, anyway. Now, brethren, the measure of God's hatred for sin, is the measure of his love for the sinner.

Sin has been lurking with murderous intent to take the life of every soul. God's wrath, is kindled against the sin. Is that wrath going to

be appeased in any way? O if it were, it would be a bad thing for us. That wrath of God against sin is to burn on until it consumes every bit of sin in this universe. Just as long as God loves the sinner, he will hate the sin, and his wrath against the sin will burn; and, thank God! that wrath against sin is going to burn, unchanged, until the universe is clean.

But look: the plan of redemption is God's effort to separate the sin from the sinner, so that he can destroy the sin, and save the sinner alive forevermore. And only when the sinner inseparably connects himself with sin, does he have to take the wrath of God. And does the Lord take delight in that?—No. When you and I have wrath, we have wrath against the man. But how about God? "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked," but rather that he turn and repent. Turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die. The wrath of God is not against the wicked, even in their extermination; but because the wicked have inseparably connected themselves with sin, they have to break it; and the Lord says he does not take any pleasure in that.

You remember that when Christ pronounced the doom of Jerusalem, he was not angry with them, but said, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" O if thou hadst known, in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace; but now they are hid from thy eyes. And that is the way God feels, even when he pronounces the doom of the sinner; not a bit different from what he feels the rest of the time—infinite love and only love, from eternity to eternity.

Every one of the attributes of God are the attributes of love. And so we want to stop saying,

God is love and something else. He is love, and love contains everything that he is.

Now this God of love, whose wrath burns only against the sin, and not against the sinner—this God of love gave a law for mankind. I have but a moment to spend on that. That law was not a dead law; it was not an arbitrary law. It was not a law saying, You do so, and I will let you live; You do so, and I will kill you. But God in infinite wisdom foreknew every principle of life and light and joy; and in infinite wisdom he foretold what he foreknew. This way, my child, is life and joy. Don't you go that way, my child; that way is death. Every bit of that law is simply the life of God, which is the love of God. It had the creative power of God in it. It was not something outside of man that man must do in order to live, but it was something that God wanted to put in him and leave in him; so many divine promises, if you please. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." When we have him, we do not want any other. That is a promise. Thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not kill. These are loving, divine, creative promises, which God intended to put in us, to carry us to the utmost heights of joy and peace, and keep us in that path forevermore. Now man transgressed that law, and thus cut himself off from the life of God, and hopelessly committed himself to the downward tendency to evil and death. The very first act of sin put him into the Niagara current of evil, which rushed down toward the cataract; and as he went on, he did not have the desire to get out. His thoughts were downward; and a man in that position is just as much dead as if he went right over the falls—he is gone. And that is where sin put man; and sin is cumulative in its action upon the

race.

We saw that all righteousness is love acting out the acts of love; so love is the basis, the source, of all righteousness. But just as love is the source of all righteousness, so hatred is the source of all iniquity.

Suppose I tell my boy not to do a certain thing and he disobeys my command, and no harm comes to him. That proves that my law is an arbitrary one. But suppose he disobeys my command, and does get hurt; that proves that my law was not arbitrary at all.

From sin came misery; from misery came misunderstanding of God; from misunderstanding of God, more hatred of God, and still more sin, and still more misery and more misunderstanding. And so it went on and on, the environment and heredity increasing toward evil, and the whole world going hopelessly on, spinning down into the abyss of sin, hated and hating one-another. And so it has been thought that God's sense of justice and his sense of wrath should be appeased, so that we could have justice; the thing that was needed was that God should so manifest himself, his love, as to win us to love, that we might act out the acts of love. That is the thing that was needed, not that we should so appease his wrath in some way that we dare come to him, but that he should manifest his love so that we would come to him.

Suppose here is a man that does a wrong thing to me; he hates me, and he lies about me, and he injures me, and misrepresents me. What shall I do? Shall I say, When you satisfy my sense of justice, and make that thing right, so that I think the thing

is all right, then I will pardon you? I am not god-like when I do that. If I am godlike, what will I do? What does the Bible say?—"Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." When that man wrongs me that way, if I am spiritual, if I am like God, who is a spirit and the father of spirits, how will I feel about it?—I will feel that the mere fact of his injuring me is such a small thing, and the fact that he has injured himself and will go down to death is such a big thing, that the first will sink out of sight; and I will go to that man, in love, not seeking to set him right toward me for my sake, but I will seek to restore him for his own sake.

That is what I will do if I am a Christian; and yet people teach that when we sin against God, and misrepresent God, he sits back and says, When I get my full satisfaction, I will grow propitious to you. O, instead of that, God gave his Son, in love, to bring us to repentance, so that he could pardon us. And just simply to restore us, and propitiate us who had become fallen in sin, and misunderstood him, and bring us back to him, and to reconcile us to him, he gave his own life, in his Son,—just that he might do that thing for us. That is the kind of God he is.

O, but you say, Christ paid the debt, and set us free. That is true, and every one of those texts in the Bible is true. When God tells us how he forgives sin, what does he say? Well, a

certain man owed another man five hundred pence, and when he had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave him. That is the way God forgives sin. Christ is the price of our pardon; that is true. But let me state it: Jesus Christ is not the price paid to the Father for our pardon; but he is the price which the Father paid to bring us to a repentant attitude of mind, so that he could pardon us freely. O, that is God, brethren. That is the Father that I love so much. I have not words to tell you how I love him. That is how God forgives sin—passes by the iniquity of his people. Christ was the free gift of God, to bring us to the place where he could pardon us freely.

But some one said to me the other day, Did not Christ have to die to make the Word of God sure?

because God said, If ye sin, ye shall die. In the first place, what did God mean when he said, If you sin, you will die? Did that include spiritual, physical, and eternal death? Did Christ die the spiritual or the eternal death?—No. Then is not that whole thing a fraud? And every time the Bible speaks of the debt, it is God that paid the debt in Christ, to propitiate us, to reconcile us. But still, you say, it had to be done before God could pardon. Yes, that is true; and I want to show you why; and then to-morrow night we will continue the subject by studying the sacrifice of Christ, and seeing that it is a larger thing than you have probably thought it was.

Any pardon and any forgiveness that would not take away the effect of sin, but that would lead us more and more into sin, and into the misery that comes from sin, would be worth nothing. If the law of God was an arbitrary thing, that did not have any penalty attached to it, the Lord could say, I will pardon you. But when you transgress that law, it is death; and when you keep the law, it is life and joy and peace.

Now read the seventh verse of the first chapter of Ephesians: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, ac-

ording to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence." If God had not been wise, he might have pardoned our sins in an imprudent way. Now, brethren, every father in this world knows what it is to want to let his children do things which they would enjoy doing, and he has to restrain that which would bring present pleasure, restrain that love, because of the evil effects it would have. Was sin ever less repentant than at the foot of the cross? There you have the thing. There was God revealing himself in Christ on the cross, and there was sin unrepentant, hatred and mocking at the foot of the cross. How did God feel toward those unrepentant sinners?—"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." That is how Christ felt, and that is how God felt. He did not have any grudge against them. He would like to forgive everybody. But why could he not do it?—It would annul his law, if it was an arbitrary law; but if it were not, it would lead men to go into sin, and sin and death would result. It would be God simply taking the place of the imprudent father and spoiling his child. And therefore, because he could not do that, he set forth Christ to be, not the propitiation of God's wrath, but the propitiation of our sins, that God might be just, and still the justifier of them who believe in Jesus; because he would take the sins away from them if they believed in him, and then he could set them free, and be just in doing it, for he would not lead anybody else into sin in doing it.

O, I am so glad that we have a God whose very nature and disposition is to pardon sin; that we have a Father who is not holding any grudge against us, but instead of that, is giving his own

life, in his Son, that he may so manifest his love as to bring us back to him, and so give us the life power as to live his life. It was needed that his life should be revealed, and his divine life imparted, that we might live that life on earth; and that is what he did in Christ. O, I am so glad we have such a God as that, who gives his own life to win us back to him! The love of God is the one unchanging thing in a universe of change. Just as the waters of a flood might run high above the mountain tops, but they could not obscure the sun in the heavens; so the waves of sin might dash high above every human affection, but they cannot change the heart of God. O brethren, we have a God that loves sinners, and that forgives sin, and that gives his own life, in his Son, to bring us to repentance, so that he can forgive us. That is the kind of God we have. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing our iniquities unto us, and giving unto us the ministry of reconciliation.

How could God love a sinner? "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." That word "world" is cosmos; it means order, harmony, beauty, arrangement. You see the world was out of harmony, out of order; but God saw underneath the world of evil, the cosmos that was, the order that was to be, and he loved the cosmos that was, and gave his life to bring out the harmony.

The Spirit of God brooding over the chaos—that love of not merely what is, but what is to be, that love of the possible—O brethren, he broods over the chaos of your life and mine. It is not simply the chaos in the great big world; but he brings out the possible in us, and restores us to his image. That is the kind of God we have.

And he has committed to us that same thing, too, so that when we become like him, we can love all men, coarse though they be on the outside. And when we have the divine life of God, which sees beneath the surface, we will see loveliness in every character, that we long to live out, and long, as God does, to bring out.

With the story which I shall now relate we will close the subject for this evening. It is the story of the wonderful legend of the Holy Grail, wrought out into verse by James Russell Lowell.

It has had a wonderful lesson in it for me. Sometimes we try to love God off into space, hoping it will hit him somehow; but I think God wants us to love every man all around us; and God wants us to have such keen eyes that we will see the Christ in every man, and love him.

You know the story runs that Launfal started to find the Holy Grail, and one June morning he rode, grandly caparisoned, in search of the Holy Grail, to enter upon his life mission. And as he rode along down there, a beggar was sitting there, asking alms; and he averted his face as he went by, and flung a coin to him. And he passed on, and traveled in many lands, and spent years in his search. But he came back to the old home, unable to find the object of his search; and riding up that same avenue toward that mansion, a beggar was sitting there as before. Launfal looked at him, and he reasoned something like this: His life is a failure; but has not mine been, too? Here I have been striving and struggling, and failed; and here is a failure, too. He somehow felt akin to that poor old beggar now. And as he put his hand in his pocket and passed out a coin, his heart went out to him with the coin; and instantly, as the legend goes, that beggar was

transformed into the Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, for whom he had been looking.

O brethren, he is near us; he is all around us. He gave his life to bring us back to him, and he has committed unto us that same business, too, that same reconciliation. And O may he enable us to see him in human forms all around us, so that we can feel just as he does, giving our lives to bring out the image of Christ in the most defaced form there is around us.

I want to close by saying to every one, that we have a God that forgives iniquity. The only people that will be destroyed at last will be those that have their weapons in their hands. He will forgive you if you will lay down your arms. May God reveal his love to us more and more, and in us more and more, is my prayer.